

A Wind in the house of Islam, David Garrison (2014)

For the sake of clarity let's define a movement of Muslims to Christ to be at least 100 new church starts or 1000 baptisms over a 2-decade period. As the first 1000 years of Christian-Muslim interactions drew to a close, millions of Christians had been assimilated into the House of Islam, while scarcely a single uncoerced Muslim movement to Christ had occurred. At Radin Abas Sadrach's death in 1924, 10-20 thousand Christians could be traced to his ministry in Indonesia, the first uncoerced Muslim movement to Christ in nearly 13 centuries. And in the first 12 years of the 21st century, and additional 69 moments to Christ of Muslims have appeared.

In 2012, a Christian foundation funded our proposal to investigate the growing number of Muslim movements to Christ and to understand how God was at work in them. In our 6 years of study we identified 82 movements in every corner of the Muslim world. Our research revealed that the world's 2157 distinct Muslim cultures and people groups could be reasonable grouped into 9 affinity clusters. These distinct geocultural clusters or complexes were defined by geography, history, languages, trade, conflict and destiny: 1) West Africa 2) North Africa 3) East Africa 4) Arab World 5) Persian World 6) Turkestan 7) West South Asia 8) Eastern South Asia 9) Malaysia. The questions we asked included: life before coming to faith in Christ, turning to Christ, life in Christ, community and their view of the Qur'an and Muhammad then and now. Interviews were collected from 45 movements in 33 Muslim groups in 14 countries. The Soviet collapse triggered an unprecedented season of access to peoples and lands that had effectively been closed to outside Christian contact for nearly a century.

We begin with the **Indo-Malaysia Room**, the first Room in which movements appeared, and proceed through the others, ending with the Arab room, where the most recent movements have taken place. Islam is a divisive topic. It's difficult to be neutral about an all-encompassing religious system that makes absolute claims on everyone and has been growing steadily for nearly 1400 years. A C-scale is useful for providing a quick glimpse at varieties of Muslim-background expressions of faith and worship: C1-worship in a foreign (generally Western) style of church in the foreign language of the missionary or foreign community; C2-same as C1, but worship in the local language; C3-culturally indigenous churches, yet avoiding cultural forms associated with their Islamic past; C4-retain permissible Islamic forms (prostrating in prayer, fasting, etc.) but do not see themselves as continuing their previous Islamic religion; C5-remain within the Muslim community and continue to identify themselves culturally and

officially as Muslims; C6- Secret/underground/anonymous followers of Christ.

We limit ourselves to what interviewees claim for themselves and the evidence demonstrated by their lives. Baptism for Christians and Muslims alike is a powerful symbol of true conversion. Our interviews were limited to those who have been baptized as a visible expression of their faith. The Qur'anic presentation of Jesus is neither normative nor sufficient for defining a follower of Christ.

Movements are corporate and possess their own internal momentum. Mixed motives are nothing new to the history of Christianity, nor are they limited to Muslim movements to Christ. Most of the 9 Rooms in the House of Islam are effectively closed and require perspectives from a variety of vantage points. The cumulative number of converts to Christ in these movements seems to range between 2 and 7 million.

Sadrach learned from his mentors Wulung and Kerman (Dutch) that he needn't reject his local Javanese culture. Sadrach was determined to retain, yet transform for Christian purposes, as many Javanese customs as possible. *Iman* is a Muslim term literally meaning "the one in front." **One of the greatest recurring motivations for Muslims coming to Christ is a rejection of the militant expression of Islam itself.** Malaysia remains a country where draconian restrictions continue to prevent Malays from turning from Islam to any other faith. But when people were stressed by unpalatable aspects of their Islamic religion such as legalism, violence, or Arabization, evangelization from the natural and open initiative of lay Christians provided Muslims with an alternative sanctuary. Insiders have followed Sadrach's lead in trying to remove as many cultural barriers to the gospel as possible by presenting it in a manner that is non-offensive to Muslims.

"Any-3" outreach tool (Anyone, Anywhere, Any Time) equips a Christian to lead a Muslim friend through an intentional gospel-sharing relationship. Any-3 evangelists then follow up interested Muslim-background seekers with a season of interactive Bible studies that use Old Testament prophet stories that have been effective in deepening a Muslim-background believer's understanding of the necessity of Christ's atoning salvation. A 5-step evangelism and weekly follow-up meetings not only nurture and disciple new believers, but also train and challenge them to immediately share their faith with family and friends.

One man, asked what it was that convinced him to follow Christ, cited the Qur'an 3:47, 19:7-19 and 21:91, all of which convinced him that *Isa al-masih* (Jesus Christ) was the Spirit of God and the only one who has ever lived who has

been perfect and holy since birth. Again and again these Muslim-background followers redirected questions away from doctrine and toward holiness and life transformation. “Formerly I was easily angered, often lied, and drank alcohol. Now I’m patient, honest and don’t drink anymore. Muhammad is just a normal person. But I sometimes use verses in the Qur’an to witness or teach others.”

Hakim is a *hafez*, meaning he has memorized the Qur’an. “A local African evangelist gave me an *Injil* (New Testament) in Arabic. Before this, I thought all Injils were corrupt and lost, but this was in Arabic. I believed Arabic to be the language of God, so it could not be corrupted.” As a result of his conversion to Christ Sheikh Hakim lost his job, his farm, and nearly his life.

In **East Africa** Islam grew in the 20th century from 6.8 million in 1900 to 78 million in 2000. The Salafis insisted that the Qur’an places Isa al-Masih (Jesus) above Muhammad! Though not professing faith in Jesus, their strict adherence to the Qur’an had elevated the status of Jesus in their understanding. Among rural Muslims, Islam is grossly infused with African Tribal Religion. Practices of witchcraft, fear of evil spirits, curses, and disease bind the population to the control of local *imams* whose functions in the community are similar to the witch doctors who preceded them. Christ-following imams and sheikhs are now guiding entire communities to follow Isa al-Masih in baptism.

The benefit of being in the mosque is to reach others. If we create another faith community outside the mosque, there will be a gap between us and the lost. Instead we insert Jesus into all of our Muslim practices. “Jesus came as a human to some humans, even though he is God. If God had wanted to save hyenas, he would have become like a hyena. We want to save Muslims and so this compels us to go into the mosque. Our brothers and sisters risk themselves to go into the mosque to win others.”

The people—not the Qur’an—said Muhammad is a Prophet. Translation of the Qur’an is changing everything. Before it was only in Arabic, which no one understood. Today knowledge is growing. “I’ve graduated more than 200 students from my *madrasa* (Islamic school of Isa). When we compare Muhammad and Isa, we see a big gap.” To lead Muslims leaders to know Jesus, we use a discovery approach. From this, they can see that the Qur’an clearly says that if you follow Muhammad, you’ll never get to heaven. God is using dissatisfaction within the Muslim community itself to draw Muslims to faith in Christ. While it is true that many of these stories of conversion begin with the Qur’an before moving to the Injil, this is not the only way Muslims are coming to faith. They are coming to faith through dreams, answered prayers, dissatisfaction with Islam and changed lives. As war and famine have

battered the Muslim communities, Christians have been there to offer an alternative to Islam. Important decisions are rarely made individually, but as a community. So it is not surprising that the movements taking place in the region often begin with sheikhs and imams. “When you look at me on the street, you see my Muslim hat and my beard, and you are afraid of me. And, to tell the truth, that is why we dress this way, to make you afraid of us. But you need to know that inside we are empty. Don’t be afraid of us. We need the gospel.”

Muslims call the 6 nations of North Africa—Mauritania, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya—the *Maghreb*, meaning the “the west” or “the place of the sunset. Barbary Coast pirates, as they were known to the West, captured hundreds of Western ships and made countless raids on European coastal towns from Italy to Iceland filling forced labor compounds and harems in Tripoli, Tunis, Oran, and Algiers with more than a million Christian slaves. The 1st and 2nd Barbary Wars (1801-05 and 1815) served as the primary catalysts for the creation of both the US Navy and the US Marines.

Repentance is a lifelong process, not a one-time thing. Most of the Berber Muslim-background believers came to faith during the **1990s**, the decade filled with Muslim violence against fellow Muslims. Two elements weighed heavily to produce several thousand believers. The first was personal witness. Again and again, converts spoke of someone—a family member, a casual friend, and intentional witness—who took time to share a testimony and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The second was answered prayers. Some encounters began with dreams, others through answered prayers and healing, but all of them involved a vital meeting with the living, transforming power of Jesus Christ. “Our country entered years of terror and bloodshed that cost the lives of 100,000 citizens. It was during those years that there was a great explosion of growth in the churches. **We had freedom, because the government was occupied with the terrorists. Throughout this time, no local Christians—Mountain Berber or Arab—were killed.** Land was costly and buildings, though attractive to the believers, invited attack from militants. As individuals and families within this people group heard about the vital Christian worship going on in a church site, they were drawn to it. When Muslim-background believers came to town from the rugged countryside for supplies, heard and then observed this vibrant church in worship, they were attracted to it.

The **Eastern South Asian** movements are far from uniform. Some issue into multiplying house churches, often call *Isa Jamaats* or Jesus Groups, while others dissolve invisibly back into Muslim communities where they have come to be known as Insider or C5 communities. C4 believers have

taken a more open Christian identity while still retaining ties to their Muslim communities.

In 1971 the Liberation War tore East and West Pakistan apart. The Pakistani army rounded up Bengali intellectuals, physicians, professors, writers, and engineers and ordered their execution. Before they left the country, Pakistani soldiers had also raped thousands of Bengali women. It is significant that it was Muslims who committed these atrocities against their fellow Muslims. Cyclones, civil war, population explosion, and religious ferment created the backdrop for the Muslim movements to Christ that emerged in the decades that followed.

The invisibility of these C4 and C5 groups to outsiders has led some to doubt their existence. We found that, though the size of the movements cannot be confirmed nor their rate of growth, their existence is undeniable. When asked how they are seeing God draw other Muslims to faith in Christ, they often point to Qur'anic passages they use to create a bridge to the Bible or into a conversation about Jesus. Several reference the *JESUS film*. Many others testified to dreams and miraculous answers to prayers. Cultural separation has led some Christians, both foreign and local, who are not a part of these networks and have never seen their Isa jamaat communities, to wonder if the movements truly exist or are a fabrication.

Carey tilted toward the Hindu population, choosing the Sanskrit-based *Ishwar* to translate the word God rather than *Allah* used by the Muslims. For the next 170 years, Carey's translation choice helped to convince Muslims that Christians worshiped some other god, likely one from a Hindu background. **Though Christians in the West typically associate the name Allah with Islam, it was Christian in origin.** What distinguishes Christians from Muslims is not the name they use for God but their theological understanding of God.

Insider movements remain cloaked to outside assessment, in part, because many of their adherents are indistinguishable to most outsiders from the Muslims around them. Both the C4 Isai Muslims and the less visible Insider believers avoid using the name Christian to describe themselves. The Insider Movements have little tolerance for foreign control or even influence from the West. They know full well that their new faith puts them at odds with the Islamic community and their own Muslim identity and they are not anxious to engage either of these threats until absolutely necessary. "I am following Jesus' example. When the demons saw his miracles, they said, 'You are the Son of God.' Jesus said to them, 'Be quiet.' This is a great teaching for us, i.e., when Jesus said, 'Be quiet. It is not the time to teach that I am the Son of God.'"

There are so many differences between the Qur'an and the Bible. The most important is the resurrection of Christ.

"Since Jesus is the Beloved of Allah, whenever there is disagreement we fall back to Jesus." Muhammad is not a rival to Christ. They know that Muhammad never claimed deity or status as savior. This may explain why Muslim followers of Christ, viewed as Insiders, found little need to attack Muhammad. **I rarely heard a disparaging word against Muhammad.** Instead, he was often described as "a disciple of Allah," "a prophet of Allah," "one of God's children," and the like.

Most of those interviewed begin their witness by developing a friendship. They then use Qur'anic passages to bridge their friend into a conversation that ultimately revealed the necessity of Jesus for salvation. **Many South Asian Muslims who went on to become followers of Jesus Christ, came to an initial faith in Christ through the Qur'an.** "In the Qur'an I found no titles of honor for Muhammad, but 23 honorable titles that Allah gave to Isa. Only 4 times does the Qur'an speak of Muhammad, and yet 97 times it talks about Isa. In every way, the Qur'an itself elevated Isa above Muhammad."

Amid was baptized but had no desire to take on a new religion. **"I will not be a Christian. I just want to follow Jesus."** First we show them from the Qur'an that only Isa al-Masih is the Savior, and then we baptize them. Then we give them the Bible and disciple them. Over time, they move away from the Qur'an and into the Bible, though they continue to use the Qur'an to bring other Muslims to faith in Isa. We have 4 negative rules: never speak against the Qur'an, Allah, Muhammad, or the *ummah* (the Muslim community). After 1 or 2 years, 70-80% stop going to the mosque. No followers of Isa in this country go on the Hajj." They do not believe Muhammad has anything to do with salvation; they do believe he is a prophet who brought our people from polytheism to monotheism; most of our Isai still read the Qur'an in their home. You can read the Qur'an if you like. It's up to you. We have many mawlanas (teachers) who can use the Qur'an to bring other Muslims to faith in Isa, and then use the Injil to disciple them. 16,000 have been baptized. We have about 3000 Isa jamaats. We baptize twice a year during the flood season, so we are expecting another 3000 or more baptisms next January.

On the eve of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, there were likely not more than 500 Muslim-background followers of Christ in a nation of 40 million mostly Shi'ite Muslims. In this **Persian Room** three decades later, hundreds of thousands of Iranian Muslims have given their lives to Christ. "Reading through the literature about Narcotics Anonymous, I discovered that it was started by an American named Bill Wilson and founded on the Christian faith. I read the story of how Wilson became sober and a Christian. The Iranian government had tried to remove Jesus from the program, but they could not. After I gave my life to Jesus, he gave me a deep peace, and my night terror ended."

Islam in Iran is unlike any other Room in the House of Islam. While 90% of the Muslim world adheres to what they regard as orthodox or Sunni Islam, Iran follows a different path. Its people are overwhelmingly Shi'ite, literally "partisans of Ali," the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad. While Sunnis draw their authority more exclusively from the textual tradition of the Qur'an, Shi'ites are different. Though they venerate the Qur'an, they also rely on religious authorities, *ayatollahs* (literally "signs of Allah") to interpret Islam for the Shi'ite faithful. Further shaping the unique nature of Islam in Iran is an ancient Persian civilization that was superior in virtually every way to the Arab invaders who conquered them in the 7th century. All of these elements of Iranian Islam, its history, values, philosophical and mystical traditions, were challenged when Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini came to power in 1979.

The ancient Armenian church played a crucial role in the current awakening in the country. Thousands of Iranians have come to faith today through satellite television and Internet websites that feature a growing number of evangelists from Persian Muslim backgrounds. Often heard in the testimonies of Iranian believers are reference to the *JESUS Film* (the Gospel of Luke) and *God is Love*. Antioch Ministries alone estimated in 2008 that 3000 a month are turning to Christ through their broadcasts. For most Iranians the popular movement that brought Khomeini to power in 1979 was not a yearning for Islam, but a desire for freedom from the despotic rule of Shay Reza Pahlavi, who, with American backing, replaced Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq.

So many Iranians today have relatives in Los Angeles that they refer to the city as *Tehrangelles*. Well-educated Iranians are departing the country at the rate of about 150,000-180,000 per year, an estimated 25% of all Iranians with a post-secondary education. The paradox of Iran is that it might be the most pro-American—or, perhaps, least anti-American—populace in the Muslim world. Iran today has the highest rate of opium addiction in the world. The country's 600-mile border with Afghanistan ensures a continuing flow of opium traffic. The single most powerful factor in the spread of the gospel in Iran has been encounters with the living person of Jesus Christ. Some meet him through dreams or visions, others through healings or answered prayers. House churches have become the primary venue for Muslim-background believers worshiping in Iran today. The Assyrian and Armenian churches are forbidden from admitting Muslim-background members and, besides, they use ancient-language liturgies that are unintelligible to many.

Turkestan Room Since the earliest records of human history, whoever has controlled Turkestan has been enriched

by the valuable Silk Road between China and Europe. Ever since the first Christian Roman emperor in the 4th century transformed the town of Byzantium into his new capital and renamed it Constantinople, it had been regarded as the "Second Rome." With the fall of Constantinople, Orthodox Christians in Moscow took up the mantle, declaring their city the "Third Rome." As the Soviet Union loosened its grip prior to its final collapse in 1989, thousands of evangelical Christians from the West made their way into the former Communist empire determined to share their faith with the millions who had been isolated from gospel witness. A mere 25 years later, Turkestan, which had known no movement to Christ in its 1399-year Islamic history, was now home to multiplying new movements of Muslims to Christ. History may yet identify the atheist Joseph Stalin as the greatest gospel deployment strategist in the history of Turkestani evangelization. As Turkestan's window of openness to the West began to close in the early years of the 21st century, churches were shuttered and disbanded. Many went underground where they thrived. Unlike Islam in the Arab and Persian world, Turkestani Muslims had never embraced the prohibitions on alcohol consumption. Consequently, alcohol abuse and its corrosive effects on their families and personal lives were frequently recurring themes. We have a saying, "When you are persecuted, thank God that you have not been thrown into prison. If you *have* been thrown into prison, thank God you have not been killed. And if you *have* been killed, thank God that you are with him in heaven."

West Africa Room West Africa is a tale of two oceans: The Atlantic to the west and the great Sahara Desert to the north. Human trafficking peaked in the trans-Atlantic slave trade of 1500 to 1866, when Europeans and American exported 10-12 million mostly West Africans to the New World as slaves. The same tribal hostilities that prompted Africans to deliver fellow Africans to Arabs, European, and Americans as slaves, persisted long after the slave trade ended. It is this legacy of internal ethnic conflict that refuses to heal and continues to plague the region to this day.

Global decolonization followed soon after the end of WW2 but did not effectively reach Africa until the end of the 1950s. The "Resource Curse" or the "Paradox of Plenty" pervades this area. Having a valuable, non-renewable source of wealth allows those who control that wealth to ignore a social contract with the people. The Christian identity of some of West Africa's most notorious tyrants is a reminder that entanglements between financial, political and religious interests are not limited to Islamic despoils but are common to the human condition regardless of religious affiliation. Christianity in this part of the Muslim world arrived more recently and appears to be the more vital force. There are three Muslim

movements to Christ here: in predominantly Christian areas, among folk Islamists, and in predominantly Muslim areas.

To assimilate a Muslim-background convert the church must replace all that the converts has lost: his family, job, wife (or prospects for one), and children. Unless a church is able to accept such a holistic challenge, it has little hope of retaining the Muslim convert. Western expressions of Christianity which emphasize rational precepts, doctrines and programs have little currency in such an environment, yet when the gospel boldly offers the power to defeat the challenges of curses, physical illness, mental illness, and demonic possession, it is welcomed. Muslim movements to Christ have a tenuous identification with the Christian religion and culture, while still exhibiting a deep commitment to the person of Christ and to the authority of the New Testament. For many Muslims who come to faith, joining a denominational church means abandoning their own people, and being abandoned by them. When the Muslim community mistreats one of their own, that person is more inclined to find an alternative sanctuary in the person of Christ and the Christian faith. "Christianity is so sweet. I love the way Christians treat each other." Militant Islamic groups such as Boko Haram have determined to eradicate Muslim movements to Christ, destroying churches and murdering converts. This violence can also prompt Muslims to turn away from Islam and seek a more peaceful faith.

Western South Asia Room Beginning in the late 1990s, the gospel contagion spread beyond foreign missionaries to local Muslim individuals who had grown weary of war, killing, retaliation and hatred. Up to this point, this Muslim movement had been almost entirely a men's movement. "In our culture, women are like shoes. We just wear them, and then when they are old we throw them out." "We were talking about what Jesus was saying about women, and how we should change, and how we should treat our wives. I will not beat my wife, and I will stop others from beating their wives. After today, we will treat our wives with respect." Failing to disciple the women in a movement had dire consequences in times of persecution. "When the men are killed or put in prison, our wives would be given over to the mosque or to the tribal leaders. Our children would have no one to teach them the way of Jesus. Within a short time, our movement would cease to exist. **Women are the key to the movement's future.**"

Arab Room The word *Arab* (Hebrew 'ereb) was used to connote the desert and the people who lived there. In the century following the death of Muhammad, Arab armies extended an empire greater than Rome at its peak. Arab speakers comprise the 4th or 5th largest language group in the world. In reality, the Arabic language is a family of languages. Illiteracy remains the bane of the Arabic speaking world. More than half of all Iraqi, Mauritanian and Yemeni citizens

are illiterate, with illiteracy among women as high as 76%. The majority of the Arab population in North and South America are Arab Christians who came to the new world either fleeing persecution or seeking greater economic and social freedoms. Arabs today are acutely aware of their proud history, which has made their current state of affairs all the more painful to accept. Crusader atrocities actually provoked many indigenous Arab Christians to switch allegiances and join the Muslims to defend their homeland. Hundreds of millions of petrodollars have gone to political concerns: Palestinian causes, the Taliban in Pakistan, and Sunni insurgents battling the regime of Alawite president Assad in Syria. Popular opinion in the Arab world continues to view the Zionist state as an injustice to Palestinian Arabs and simply the latest Crusade by the West into the Holy Land.

Abouna Zakaria Botros (Father Zechariah Peter) is a 79-year old, exiled Egyptian Coptic priest who infuriates Muslim Fundamentalists. By 2008, his live 90-minute program was reaching 60 million Arabs a day on the *al-Hayat* ("The Life") satellite television program. On his website chat room at www.islamchristianity.net thousands of Arabs routinely ply Zakaria with questions about Islam and Christianity.

Many who are counted as Sunni Muslims are not. They are Shi'ites or Druze, even Communists and atheists, or they are Muslim converts to other faiths such as Christianity. These things they keep hidden. "All of the teachings of Muhammed were against women. Nasr opened my mind." Nasr is a Muslim who has given his life to dismantling Islam. "I'm just asking questions. There's a barrier against **you**. The first thought that comes to their mind when you question the Qur'an is that you are against them, because you are an American." There are a large number of secret believers. When the parties of terrorists and the Islamic Brotherhood surfaced with the Arab Spring, people could see how violent Islam is. When someone from a Muslim background comes to the Christian church and says, 'I want to become a Christian,' they say 'No.'" They are afraid of the secret police. At times the church will even turn people in to the government when they say they want to be a Christian. New believers go through the process of learning how to share their faith. **We teach them the 5 prophet stories from the Bible that lead to a gospel presentation.** Then they study together from Isaiah and Luke.

Arrest and kidnapping are the same. There is an evil in Islam, as with all religions, when it is used to control and manipulate its followers or incite them to violence against those who would exercise their freedom of conscience to embrace a different way. Islam today is perhaps the most intrusive and egregious world religion at squelching nonconformity of belief. We must remember, though that Islam is probably no more controlling than was Roman Catholicism in the Mid-

dle Ages or, Puritanism in the early years of Anglo-American history. Muslim-background followers of Christ are less enamored with the label of “Christian” and what they perceive to be “the religion of Christianity.” Many have chosen not to identify themselves as Christians in order to expand their witness to their Muslim friends and family, Others have seen in Christianity a cultural or political association they choose not to embrace. **The question of true conversion is a question of life transformation.** For most of the interviewed, the transformation began immediately.

Muslim-background believers have not been assessed in those parts of the world where they have been assimilated as individuals into existing open Christian communities or where persecution has been so severe as to provoke an anonymous response to Christ. www.WindintheHouse.org provides more insights. “Prayers have accumulated like the great clouds during the monsoon season. And now they are raining down upon my people the miracles and blessings of salvation that God has stored up for them.” **Prayer has been the first and primary strategy for virtually every new initiative into the Muslim world.** Prayer changes us as well as those for whom we pray. Prayer draws us near to the heart of God, and near to the heart of God are countless Muslims in need of a Savior. **If the Holy Spirit is the wind that is blowing through the House of Islam, then prayer is one of the ways we spread our sails and catch that wind.**

Scripture in the local language has been instrumental to every movement we have examined. We are only beginning to see the effect of the broad dissemination of Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture portions into the languages of Muslims around the world. As this effort continues, the response is likely to follow. Much of the Muslim world remains illiterate, but new initiatives to provide the Bible through storying, the *JESUS film*, and radio and television broadcasts hold forth the promise that Holy Scripture will continue to ignite and fuel movements across the Muslim world.

God is visiting these Muslims through dreams, visions, and answered prayers in the name of Jesus. Muhammad endorsed the value of dreams in his own life, prompting Muslims worldwide to give a credence to dreams that is no longer current in the more secularized Western world. Gone are the crusades, inquisitions and colonial conquest that sought to expand the kingdom of God by expanding the kingdoms of men. It was the challenge of distinguishing culture from gospel that provoked the first council of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15_1-21), and the challenge has continued through the centuries.

For many Muslims whose testimonies we gathered, their pilgrimage to Christ began with a clear reading for the first time of the Qur’an in their own language, which shattered

the illusion. So potent is this discovery of the Qur’an limitations that **many Muslim-background Christ followers have urged the spread of colloquial Qur’an translations as a prelude to gospel witness.** As one Muslim-background evangelist put it, **“Only after I read the Qur’an in my own language, did I realize how lost I was.”** The best course of action has been for Muslim-background believers themselves to raise these matters. **Today’s Muslims are increasingly repulsed by a religion that imposes its will with force.**

Indigenization takes over where contextualization leaves off. True discipleship that goes to the deepest core of cultural sins requires indigenization for its accomplishment. When the missionary modeled submission to God’s word rather than offering her own advice, the new believers found a path forward.

In 1204 European Christians did what no Muslim army had accomplished, when they rerouted the 4th Crusade to sack Constantinople instead of the Muslim-controlled Holy Land. In a self-destructive act that pitted Western Christian against Eastern Christian, the way was paved for Islam to eventually swallow what was left of the Byzantine Empire, as Christians, not Muslims, first looted the city, destroyed its libraries, stole its monuments, and violated its churches. Islam canonized 7th century Arab culture and used military might to advance it as God’s ideal for the world. **When we find ourselves threatened, we are tempted to follow the path that Muhammed charted--legalistic answers for every aspect of life and violent reactions to those we perceive to be our enemies. When we succumb to those tendencies, we may become more like the Muslims we fear than the Christ who promised us his power and presence.** When we regard our particular expression of Christian culture as the norm for all Christ followers, and adopt oppressive or violent means to impose those cultural patterns—as we did during the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the more recent Colonial Era—we are mimicking the path of Islam rather than of Christ.

From its 7th century inception Islam has spoiled for a fight and invited Christians to do the same. Given our great might, wealth, and military advantage, many Westerners, even Western Christians, are ready to gamble the future on a head-to-head battle with Islam. **Our history of failure in reaching Muslims for Christ has coincided with our failures to be like Christ to Muslims.** Muslims are choosing to come---not to us or “our side”—but to our Lord. **When Christians disregard injustice and dismiss those who are the victims of injustice, we open the door to Islam.** When the first Arab Muslim armies rolled across the Middles East and North Africa, they found a region replete with injustices that Christians had long ignored. 7th century Coptic Christians in Egypt, whose patriarch had been imprisoned for opposing the doctrinal authority of the

Catholic Church, swung open the gates of Alexandria to Arab invaders under the promise that Muslims would allow them to worship freely. As Muslim armies continued across North Africa, they found thousands of slaves who had been owned for centuries by Christian patricians.

When Christians are proactive and move to combat social injustice both at home and abroad, we inoculate our communities against Islamic incursions. And more importantly, we honor the cause of Christ. In the same way, many of the Muslim movements to Christ we are witnessing today have occurred because of unaddressed injustices that have been ignored within the House of Islam, prompting Muslims to find refuge and justice in the person of Christ. Christians who never envisioned going to the Muslim world are finding that the Muslim world has come to them. We are tempted to engage the challenge of Islam in our own strength. But to do so is to forfeit the insuperable power that has been willed to us by the one who took on himself “the very nature of a servant” and “humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). Our struggle is “not against flesh and blood,” in other words, not against Muslim men, women, and children, but “against the spiritual forces of evil.” Prayer originates with God and returns to God on behalf of those who do not know God. Define ministry as “answering the prayers of lost people.”

[One of the greatest recurring motivations for Muslims coming to Christ is a rejection of the militant expression of Islam itself. In the 1990s, because the government was occupied with the terrorists, no local Christians—Mountain Berber or Arab—were killed. Many South Asian Muslims who went on to become followers of Jesus Christ, came to an *initial* faith in Christ through the Qur’an. “I will not be a Christian. I just want to follow Jesus.” Women are the key to the movement’s future. Scripture in the local language has been instrumental to every movement we have examined. Prayer has been the first and primary strategy for virtually every new initiative into the Muslim world. Many Muslim-background Christ followers have urged the spread of colloquial Qur’an translations as a prelude to gospel witness. “Only after I read the Qur’an in my own language, did I realize how lost I was.” When Christians disregard injustice and dismiss those who are the victims of injustice, we open the door to Islam. When Christians are proactive and move to combat social injustice both at home and abroad, we inoculate our communities against Islamic incursions.]